

From: JimThiele
Affiliation:
Address: 4601 Mars
Anchorage, Alaska, 99507

Comment: Dear Ms. Childs:

1

I just returned from a 12 day raft trip (Nigu River to the Coleville). I have also been to the Teshekpuk Lake area as a biological researcher for the University of Alaska and many other arctic areas as a visitor. I strongly oppose your preferred alternative for amending the oil and gas leasing plan for the northeastern planning area of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A). I urge you to select Alternative A, the No Action Alternative, and to prepare a new plan that will strengthen the existing environmental and wildlife protection in the area, especially in the critical and fragile Teshekpuk Lake region.

002
Wildlife

The entire Teshekpuk Lake area deserves protection. If I read the material correctly, your preferred alternative would reduce protection to 213,000 acres. That level of protection will not begin to protect the migratory birds, or the caribou - I've seen first hand how much land they can traverse in a single day. The idea that I have heard put forth that there is some "new science" that would indicate development would not have an impact seems particularly outrageous. The credible research I have seen clearly indicates that geese are highly sensitive to disturbance during the molt. And it shows that caribou that give birth to their young in this area are also at risk from the kind of disturbance your preferred alternative would permit.

3

At the same time, there is no science to show that these areas, closed under the existing leasing plan, can be safely opened. Your proposal would jeopardize a globally significant ecological resource.

4

The real bottom line is that there is no need to open these sensitive areas to exploration and development - the areas already included for exploration are enourmous.

Please choose Alternative A, the No Action Alternative.
Sincerely,
Jim Thiele - 4601 Mars Drive, Anchorage AK 99507

Attached: None